IBC Policy Statement on Properly Representing Specialty Practice in Chiropractic

Iowa Rule 45.2(3) provides a statement regarding how chiropractors may represent themselves:

"Use of untruthful or improbable statements in advertisements. Use of untruthful or improbable statements in advertisements includes, but is not limited to, an action by a licensee in making information or intention known to the public which is false, deceptive, misleading or promoted through fraud or misrepresentation or representations that are likely to cause the average person to be misled."

Use of the terms "specialist", "specializing in" or "specialty" typically indicate to the public that the doctor has both advanced training and passed testing to demonstrate proficiency. Since the designation of chiropractor, indicates an advanced degree; further designation as a "specialist" would then identify the doctor as somewhat unique among other chiropractors. Chiropractors who utilize these terms should maintain a record of both the coursework and the documentation of proficiency by testing in the area the specialty description refers to.

"Certified" or "certification" are also terms that indicate advanced training and achievement among one's peers. When these terms are used, they should be accompanied by an identifier of the certifying body. (For example, "...certified in orthopedics by the American Board of Chiropractic Orthopedists.") Sometimes a specialty description uses terms such as "Chiropractic Orthopedist", "Diplomate in Chiropractic Pediatrics" or "practicing Chiropractic Neurology". These are also appropriate when accompanied by the identifier of the certifying body (for example: "John Doe, DC, DABCO"). Chiropractors who utilize these terms should maintain a record of both the coursework and the documentation of proficiency by testing in the area the specialty description refers to. The IBC considers the term "Diplomate" to indicate that the doctor has training that is somewhat unique among their peers. "Diplomate of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners" does not indicate a significant degree of specialty training or testing among other Iowa chiropractors and the IBC considers that use of this designation in advertising may be misleading to the public.

The term "board eligible in ....." (orthopedics or neurology, for example) may be used when the certifying board is identified and documentation is available in the doctors place of business identifying both the requirements for board eligibility and the accumulation of those requirements by the doctor.

A practical guideline in this area is that a prospective patient should be able to easily verify the specialty or certification status of the doctor by review of documents in the clinic and contacting a third party. It is also required that the doctor make clear that they are a chiropractor.

The IBC encourages postdoctoral training and certification. The ability of doctors of chiropractic to serve the health care needs of Iowans is greatly enhanced as the number of

qualified specialists within the chiropractic profession increases. The IBC also will work to insure the public can clearly identify doctors who have met the standards of "specialist" or "certification". Chiropractors who use these terms, but do not have appropriate documentation may be considered in violation of 45.2(3).

This policy statement is advisory in nature only. It is a method for the Board to express its concerns regarding public confusion and to provide the public, licensees and other interested parties information regarding appropriate chiropractic specialty designations.

Board Approved - October 8, 2008